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Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society of North America

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Cover Wellhead installations at the Wairakei Geothermal Field of New Zealand. See "Geothermal Systems and Power Development," by A. J. Ellis, p. 510. (Photograph by A. L. Tilbury.)

"For the encouragement of scientific research"

Sigma Xi has long been committed to the furtherance of science through its major programs of Grants-in-Aid of Research, the National Lectureships, and publication of *American Scientist*. Complementing these national efforts, the chapters and clubs have conducted various programs at the local level, depending on their special interests and capacities. But now—with science and technology apparently at an all-time low in the public esteem while simultaneously greater demands are being made of it than ever before—there is an urgent need for some kind of program to increase public understanding of what science has contributed to human life and what science can and cannot do.

With this in mind, the Board of Directors have appointed an ad hoc committee on The Future Role of Sigma Xi in the Public Understanding of Science, to consider various paths the Society's efforts might take. The committee members (see p. 496) would welcome any ideas as to possible ways to achieve this goal. Local groups already involved in community programs, such as high school science fairs, radio interviews about science subjects, public lectures, etc., can share their expertise with the rest of us. Because of the new urgency, the Board believes that it would be appropriate for the Society as a whole to explore the various ways it could best contribute to a greater public awareness of the opportunities and limitations of science.

This matter will be brought up at the National Meeting in November, and we hope by that time to have received many suggestions so that the committee will be able to present a wide range of ideas to the delegates. Our Society is unique in having both its network of chapters and clubs, which makes activity at the local level possible, and its national organization through which activities can be coordinated for greater effectiveness.

Frederick E. Terman

President